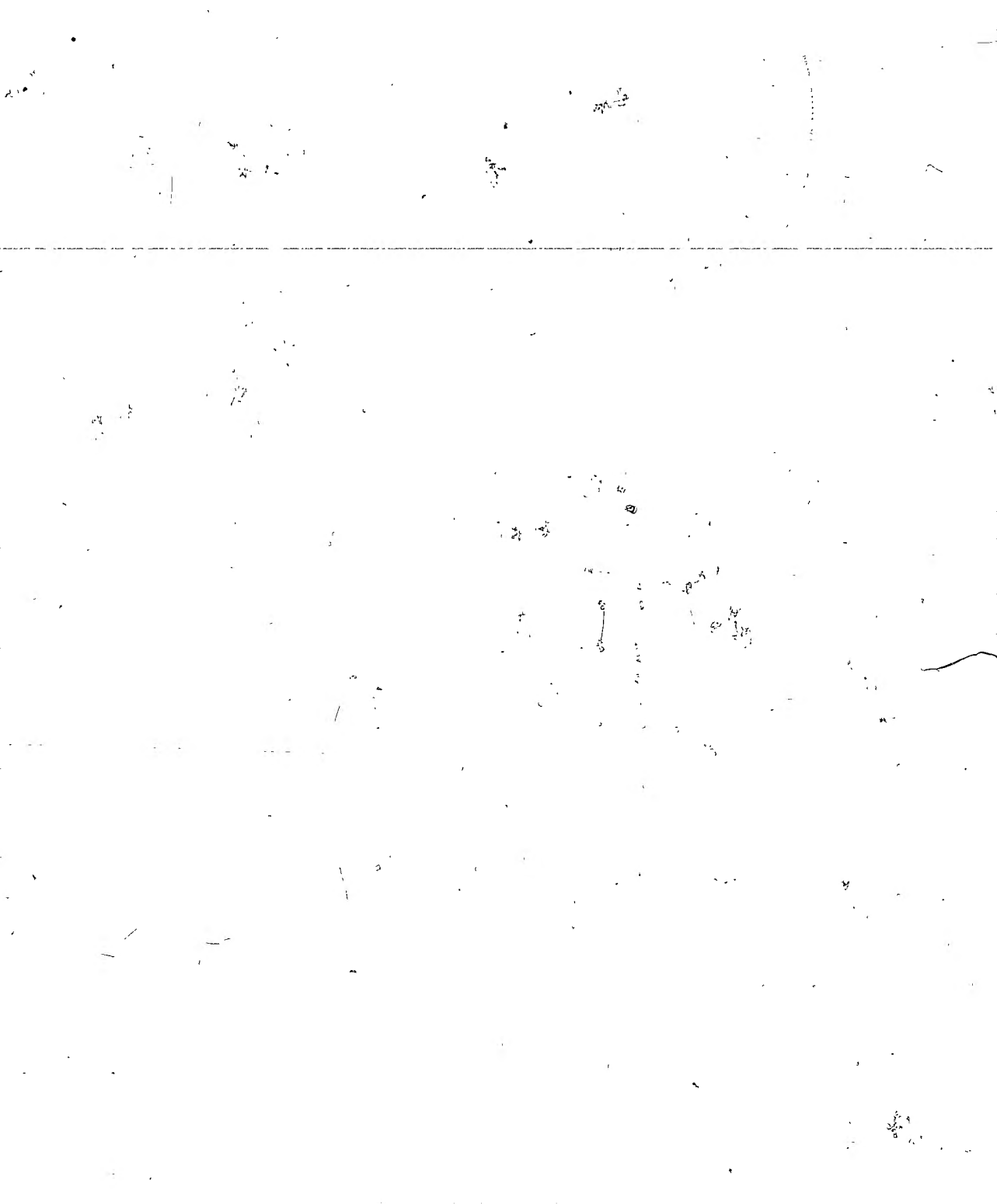


The
Work of the Church of England
AMONG
English Speaking Settlers
IN THE
Diocese of Saskatchewan
IN THE EARLIER YEARS OF THE DIOCESE



By

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(*Rural Dean of Battleford*)



PAPER ON THE WORK OF "THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AMONG
THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING SETTLERS IN THE DIOCESE OF SASK-
ATCHEWAN IN THE EARLIER YEARS OF THE DIOCESE".

*Prepared by Rev. Canon E. K. Matheson at the re-
quest of the members of the Rural Deanery of Battleford
and read by him at the meeting of the Rural Deanery held
in St. Mary's Church, Meota, Sask., on Wednesday,
August Twenty-ninth, Nineteen hundred and Seventeen.,*

In dealing with the subject of the work of the Church of England among the English-speaking settlers in the Diocese of Saskatchewan, in the earlier years of the Diocese, we may note in approaching the subject that the Diocese of Saskatchewan was formed out of the Mother Diocese of Rupert's Land in 1872 that until the year 1883 when the greater portion of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle was sliced off from the then Diocese of Saskatchewan, and set apart as a separate Diocese, that the Diocese of Saskatchewan embraced (with the exception of a small extension to the East) what is known as the Diocese of that name, together with nearly all of the present Diocese of Qu'Appelle; all of the present Diocese of Calgary; all of the present Diocese of Edmonton; and a northern extension which included a very liberal slice off the North Pole.

In a readjustment of the Diocese when Qu'Appelle was formed, the Eastern portion of the present Diocese of Saskatchewan, extending from Cumberland House to the Grand Rapids, was transferred to the Diocese of Saskatchewan from the Mother Diocese of Rupert's Land owing to the travelling facilities as they existed then.

In 1872 this "vast area" was set apart from the Mother Diocese of Rupert's Land and duly organised as the Diocese

of Saskatchewan with the Right Reverend John McLean as the first Bishop. He was consecrated as Bishop on May 3rd. 1874; but had previously spent a year or so mainly in England, in the work of raising money to form the Bishopric Endowment Fund for the new Diocese.

For the purposes of this paper we may limit ourselves practically to the Diocese of Saskatchewan with its present boundaries.

In his Charge to the first Synod he convened, on Aug. 31st. 1882, Bishop McLean said concerning conditions as they were in 1874—"There were a few small settlements of white people, no missionaries amongst them" (this of course in addition to the many Indians Missions, and the thousands of Indians in the Diocese). A little further on in his address he says that in 1874 we had only two clergymen, one at Stanley Mission on the English or Churchill River about 250 miles north of Prince Albert (this was the present Archdeacon J. A. Mackay) and one at the Nepowewin Mission, Fort a la Corne (this was the Rev. Luke Caldwell, a Deacon). These ministered to the Indians in their respective districts as did also Mr. (now Rev.) John Hines out at Sandy Lake, about 60 miles north-west of Prince Albert.

Prince Albert is the oldest settlement of white settlers in the Diocese. Here settlement was begun in 1862 on June 3rd. So far as my information goes, and I received the information from the man himself, the first white person to settle there and build a home for himself and family was Mr. James Isbister (a cousin of the great A. K. Isbister, Esq., of "Isbister Scholarships" fame) who worked amongst the Indians as a School Teacher and Lay Reader in different parts of this Diocese for many years and was a member of this Rural Deanery for some time, while he taught on the Stoney Reserve, and who died in Prince Albert about two years ago at a very advance age.

At this point we must note the fact that there were officials and employees with families at various H. B. C. Posts, who were white people to whom the ministrations of our Church were extended, and that a very appreciable percentage of the members of some of our present organised parishes is of this class or their descendants, some of them have taken a leading part in our Church work for many years.

Well, the settlement of Prince Albert when once started continued to grow in numbers and importance, acting as a magnet on some of the people in the East, and as a place where retiring members of the H. B. Co. chose to settle.

I may here mention that in the year 1866 the Presbyterian Church of Canada sent out a missionary, the Rev. James Nisbet, to establish a Mission somewhere in the Saskatchewan Country. He brought with him quite a number of settlers from the pioneer Presbyterian Parish of the Canadian West viz: Kildonan, Manitoba. The site chosen for their Missionary headquarters was what is now the centre of the City of Prince Albert. Here they erected substantial buildings, and soon began to extend their missionary operations. And we may add that the Missionary ministered to our people as well as to his own, until Bishop McLean arrived on the scene in the winter of 1874-5 a period of about eight years just as our Missionaries had ministered to the Presbyterians in the old Red River Settlement from 1820 to 1851 a period of 30 years or more.

When our people in the Prince Albert Settlement heard that a Bishop had been appointed for Saskatchewan, they sent a petition to the late Archbishop Machray, who was then Bishop of Rupert's Land, requesting that a clergyman be sent among them. He answered that he would send them not only a clergyman but a bishop; and it was not a very long time afterwards when Bishop McLean, their own bishop, appeared on the scene and set to work to organize a parish.

Then

"He arrived in Prince Albert about the end of February 1875 having come across the "Lake Route" via Lake Manitoba, Cumberland and Fort a la Corne; he stayed at the Hudson's Bay Post with the late Philip Turner; left P. A. with me for Winnipeg on the 16th April; came back in September of same year and wintered here".

(Extract from letter written by Mr. Thomas McKay of Prince Albert, August 11th 1917)

I may add that during this time, a further contingent of our people from Manitoba arrived in the district, and settled a few miles west of where the City of Prince Albert now stands, the present parish of St. Catharines. This, together with the settlers already mentioned, formed practically one settlement, extending in a Westerly direction along the south bank of the North Saskatchewan River for a distance of some 10 or 12 miles.

Bishop McLean arrived at the settlement of Prince Albert in the winter of 1874-5. The people had heard of his intended visit and prepared for it accordingly, so that when he arrived at the settlement he found that many of the men were out in "the pines" chopping logs with which to erect a Church building. The next day he drove out to see them at work, had a good dinner of pemican and tea with them, then spoke to them in the open air words of appreciation and encouragement; then with all kneeling down in the snow "he gave thanks, and prayed" to God for His guidance and blessing. The tangible result of that effort on the part of the people may be seen to the present day in the old St. Mary's Church which still stands where it was first erected near the old Emmanuel College grounds. Bishop McLean's body lies buried in the shade of that old Church since 1886. In the course of another year or so a second Church was erected, St. Catherine's. It, too, is still standing and is in regular use.

But you may ask "What about a Clergyman to reside amongst the people"? Well, it was not long before Bishop McLean secured a Clergyman in the person of the Rev. Isaac Barr, whose name we have so often heard in connection with "The Barr Colony". He ministered to the two missions of St. Mary's and St. Catherine's for a year or more, and then returned East. I have always felt convinced that it was his experiences then, together with the colonizing spirit of Bishop McLean, who was himself a most enthusiastic immigration agent, that first gave Mr. Barr the inspiration which ultimately led to the organizing and bringing out of the "Barr Colony" in 1903, nearly 30 years later.

After Mr. Barr's return to the East, two other Clergymen were brought out to minister to the young settlements. Those were the Rev. George Forneret, (now Archdeacon Forneret of Hamilton, Ontario,) and the Rev. Ernest Edward Wood (who in after years went over to do work in the United States. They came out in 1877 and remained for two years. About the time they returned East, Bishop McLean with his family had taken up his residence permanently in Prince Albert. He had spent a good deal of his time there at intervals prior to this, but from that time the ministrations of the Church amongst the English speaking settlers were carried on regularly in an uninterrupted succession.

By this time too another white settlement had been formed, out at the South Branch of the Saskatchewan about 15 miles south of Prince Albert, now known as St. Andrew's Parish (or the Halcrow Settlement) and still another was soon founded between the rivers and now known as St. Paul's Parish (or the "Pocha Settlement). The names "Halero" and "Pocha" were given from a prominent family in each settlement, before the places were organised into regular parishes:

Another mission which was opened out in the very

early eighties was then called "Goschen". It is now known as St. George's or East Prince Albert.

Settlements of people from Eastern Canada were also forming about this time in the Carrot River and Stoney Creek Districts, places now known as Kinistino and Melfort. These also were provided with the ministrations of the Church. To these we may add that when Archdeacon Mackay came, with his family, to reside in Battleford, in the year 1877, a little village had been founded on the south flat of the Battle River, at the foot of the hill on the top of which stood the "Government House", the first "Parliament Building" of the North West Territories, when Battleford was the Capital, which house at a later date (when the Capital was transferred from Battleford to Regina) became known as the "Indian Industrial School", but which is now the headquarters, in Saskatchewan, of the Seventh Day Adventists. The little village on the "Battle River Flat" was ministered to by the present Archdeacon Mackay while he remained there and afterwards by the Rev. Thomas Clarke (now the Rural Dean of Melfort). It gradually grew from a trading post of the H.B.Co. to be a village with several stores, and a newspaper "The Saskatchewan Herald". This is the oldest newspaper west of Winnipeg. I would add that Governor Laird was most regular and exemplary in his attendance at the services held in the village. He always set a good example in every respect to the whole community.

A few days ago I came across an interesting item in Archdeacon Mackay's Journal of those days, it is as follows: April 13th. Easter Day 1879. "We had a nice English service in the forenoon. We had Jackson's Te Deum and also the Special Anthem for Easter Day well rendered by our Choir, Miss Owen as usual leading on the harmonium".

After the village had been flooded once or twice and was partly destroyed as one result of the Rebellion of 1885 the inhabitants thought it best to move over to the higher benchland between the rivers, where the Town of Battleford now stands, and in this way it gradually became merged in the congregation of St. George's.

In the year 1879 on November 1st. Bishop McLean opened the worked of Emmanuel College in the Prince Albert Settlement nearby where St. Mary's Church stands. He used his own study as a class room, while Archdeacon Mackay (who with his family had just then moved from Battleford to Prince Albert) conducted his classes, as Bishop McLean's assistant in a little log school house nearby, the Church Parish School connected with St. Mary's Church. With some students there doing "Sunday Duty" it was found possible to keep services going in all the adjoining centres, I may say just here that during that winter I taught the day school in this little building for a part of the term and in the adjoining parish of St. Catherine's for the other part of the winter in order to pay my way through the College and that the pupils in these schools were all English-speaking.

On the 2nd. day of May 1880 I was ordained to the Diaconate and was subsequently placed in charge of St. Catherine's Parish, working also under Archdeacon Mackay as the Priest in charge in the neighbouring parishes for that summer. In the Autumn of that same year I presented to Bishop McLean for Confirmation a class of candidates numbering 57. All these were English-speaking, some old, some young. From this time on there was a continual increase in the number of Clergymen; the number of students and the number of mission centres regularly ministered to, as well as the number of parishes organised.

We may now come to deal with the age of Diocesan Synods, the first of which was held on the 31st of August

1882. At this Synod there were in addition to the Bishop eight Clergymen and eight Lay Delegates present. Let me give you the names of the eight Clergymen as they appear in the Synod Journal and in the order given:- J. A. Mackay, (now Archdeacon), George McKay, E. Matheson, James Settee, Samuel Trivett, Thomas Clarke, John F. Pritchard, David Stranger. Of these, two (Settee and Stranger) have been called to their reward in the other world; three others (G. McKay, S. Trivett and J. F. Pritchard) have removed to other Dioceses; while the remaining three are still in active work in our own Diocese of Saskatchewan. The Rev. James Settee had the distinction of having been the second native of this Country ordained to the sacred ministry of the Church in Western Canada, while the Rev. David Stranger was the Interpreter and faithful Assistant to the Rev. John Hines in establishing and building up our mission at Sandy Lake.

In looking over the names of the eight Lay Delegates I find that not one of them remains with us now in the flesh but they have all been called to their rest.

Just here I may note that two of the eight Clergymen (G. McKay and S. Trivett) were from Fort Macleod which at that time was included in the then Diocese of Saskatchewan, the other six represented parishes or missions, within the area of the present Diocese, as did also all the Lay Delegates. Four of the Clergy and six of the Lay Delegates represented six English-speaking congregations.

Our next step takes us on to the Synod of 1886 and there we find a new departure. In giving a list of the number of the Clergy and the Societies supporting them Bishop McLean makes mention of "1 supported by the Colonial & Continental Society for settlers". This one Clergyman was the Rev. A. H. Wright whom the Bishop had appointed as a "Travelling Missionary" the first "Driving Clergyman" specially appoint-

ed as such for white work in the history of the Diocese. His "Driving Belt" extended from Saskatoon northward to the neighbourhood of Prince Albert. A few years later this came to be quite the usual thing. (It had always been a feature of the work in our Indian missions).

Now I need not take up your time with details of each subsequent Synod. I only note in passing that in-coming Settlers meant more English-speaking missions to be organized, that Bishop McLean died in 1886, Nov. 7th., and that the Diocese of Saskatchewan, as it existed at that time was divided in 1887 into the two Dioceses of Saskatchewan and Calgary, with Bishop Pinkham as Bishop of both and that from that time on we have to deal with the Diocese of Saskatchewan in its present area. I therefore take you on to the first Synod of this smaller Diocese presided over by Bishop Pinkham and held in Prince Albert on August 28th 1889.

At that time the Clergy list in addition to the Bishop numbered fifteen of whom five at least were ministering to English-speaking parishes or missions. There were at that time at least fifteen English-speaking missions ministered to by the Clergy of the Diocese. Parochial Statistical Reports at that Synod give a list of eleven with an estimated population of 1717 and I know of four parishes not included in those 11 reports.

In addition to these there were places which were classed as Indian Missions, but where there were quite a number of English speaking people, and where services were held regularly in English, such for example were Onion Lake and The Pas.

Just here, as a little incident in our history, I may mention that in July 1890 an Ordination was held by Bishop Pinkham in Saskatoon, when Mr. Charles Cunningham,

B. A., a graduate of St. John's College, Winnipeg and Manitoba University, was admitted to the Diaconate. I had the privilege of presenting the Candidate. It was the Bishop's intention to have placed him in charge of Saskatoon, but he was sent instead to Edmonton. Subsequently he returned to this Diocese and worked for several years in the Birch Hills and Kinistino District. He is now with our overseas forces at the front doing duty "Somewhere in France".

The railway at that time (July 1890) had just reached Saskatoon and the bridge was in course of construction. "The people of Saskatoon celebrated the arrival of the first locomotive at their village on May 15th. 1890 by a torch-light procession and a general jollification". During the following winter (1890-1) I had the pastoral charge of Saskatoon, working it in connection with Battleford and Bresaylor, of which parishes I was then the Incumbent, so it was a case of Battleford cum Bresaylor cum Saskatoon. I may therefore claim the honour of being the first missionary appointed by the Anglican Church to the pastoral charge of Saskatoon.

A change was made however in the following summer owing to railway facilities; and so we find Bishop Pinkham saying in his charge to the Synod held at Prince Albert in 1891 (August 6th) "I now hope to constitute Duck Lake, Saskatoon and Carlton one mission under a Clergyman who will have his headquarters at Duck Lake."

To shew that something was being done in the direction of self-support we find Bishop Pinkham in his charge to the Synod held in Prince Albert on August 22nd. 1894 saying "After an unavoidable vacancy of several months, St. Alban's parish has been filled by the appointment of the Rev. George Moore from the Diocese of Newcastle, Australia. St. Alban's

being now self-supporting, Mr. Moore has the title of Rector." Thus St. Alban's parish may be called the "Mother" of self-supporting parishes in the Diocese of Saskatchewan. I may say that St. George's and some others were doing something towards the same end.

In his charge to the Synod on that occasion Bishop Pinkham further said, "Just before the service commenced I signed an agreement with the Rector and Churchwardens of this parish under which the Church, while it is and will remain the parish church, becomes for the present the Cathedral of the Diocese. This "agreement" officially constituting St. Alban's as the Cathedral or Pro-Cathedral of the Diocese of Saskatchewan is printed in full along with the "Journal of Proceedings of the Synod."

There were seventeen Clergymen present at that Synod out of the twenty on the list, six of these were ministering to English-speaking parishes; some of them to as many as four. The list of English-speaking parishes is given in the report as numbering seventeen. There is also a list of eight Lay Readers, the predecessors of the modern "Catechist."

Two years later the number of Clergymen in the Diocese is given as twenty in addition to which there is a list of nine Licensed Lay Readers.

In 1898 the list of the Clergy numbered nineteen, while that of the Lay Readers numbered thirteen. Of these two orders, eight Clergymen and six Lay Readers were ministering to twenty English speaking parishes or missions as given by the Parochial Statistics and the Synod report of that year.

We now come to the last Synod presided over in the Diocese of Saskatchewan by Bishop Pinkham. It was held in Prince Albert on September 25th and 26th 1900.

The number of the Clergy had owing to departures been reduced to seventeen, while the list of English-speaking missions gives only a slight increase (1) and so end the Synod Reports, nine in number under the old regime and in the old 19th. century.

I think I need not weary your minds any more with Statistics although I think they were necessary as shewing the work and growth of the Church during the formative period of the work in the earlier years of the Diocese.

I think that now in closing this paper, I may content myself with introducing the Old and the New to each other then modestly retire. In order to do this the next step is a period of five years and it witnessed great and momentous changes, changes of far-reaching importance.

The old century had passed away forever and a new century had dawned upon us; and a new Bishop had come in to take up the work of Chief Shepherd in the Diocese. Immigrants by thousands came flocking into the Diocese from the South and East and from many countries across the ocean and spread all over the Diocese.

“We hear the tread of pioneers,
Of nations yet to be,
The first low wash of waves, where soon
Shall roll a human sea.”

After an absence of nearly thirty years, the Rev. Isaac Barr appeared once more on the scene, bringing with him in 1903 nearly 2,300 settlers from England, and established the “Barr Colony”.

The Canadian Northern Railway threaded its way across the Diocese from East to West in 1905-6. Small towns, villages and settlements began to spring up in all directions waking up the long silence of our Country; and the Church

was suddenly brought face to face with a greatly increased responsibility, the call of the multitudes for the ministrations of the Church. Five years had elapsed between Bishop Pinkham's last Synod meeting and Bishop Newnham's first one in the Diocese of Saskatchewan, the first one in the new (20th.) Century.

Bishop Newnham called the Synod together for July 23rd. 1905 and following days. In his Charge he said: "It is a memorable occasion; for not only is it the first meeting of the Synod of Saskatchewan since the completion of the separation of the Diocese of Calgary and Saskatchewan, but also the first occasion of my meeting you assembled in Synod and the first time I have been called upon to preside over any Synod. It is five years since you met in Synod, and much has happened in that time." He spoke of the number of Clergy having increased to twenty-five and the number of organized parishes having also increased, for all of which we feel devoutly thankful.

From that time on the work is well known to you all and is too modern to be written up as ancient history. But from what I have written you may see that work amongst the English-speaking communities of this Diocese was begun concurrently, we may say, with the setting apart and organizing of the Diocese, that it was a "day of small things" at first, but that it continually increased until at the end of the first twenty-five years, say, the year 1900 there were some twenty English-speaking parishes organized and ministered to by our Church in the Diocese, also that a weighty responsibility is our inheritance from the past.

The men who were privileged to work in the Diocese in those days endeavoured to "do their bit" with the material available in laying the foundations and building up the structure of the Church just as those of you who work now

are doing, many of you in new places with the material available now.

Of the old places we may say: "Other men laboured, and you have entered into their labours". In other cases you are building on the foundations you yourselves have laid; and in still other places you are laying foundations on which others will build in the years to come. And so it comes to pass "that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together". "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed". "Go ye in and possess the land." And to every one of you who is endeavouring to "lift high the Royal Banner" I would say with all my heart, "The Lord thy God be with thee and prosper thee whithersoever thou goest."

E. K. MATHESON.

